

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. ARGENTINA: MRS. PERON CHOOSES NOT TO RUN

IN MOVES CALCULATED TO SILENCE OPPOSITION CRITICS, MRS. PERON HAS RECALLED CONGRESS AND ANNOUNCED SHE WILL NOT SEEK REELECTION. THE RECONVENING OF CONGRESS THWARTS OPPOSITION EFFORTS TO "AUTO CONVOKE" PARLIAMENT AND VOTE ON THE PRESIDENT'S ABILITY TO GOVERN. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES NOTES THAT MALICIOUS ATTEMPTS TO DRAG THE US INTO THE CURRENT CRISIS HAVE FAILED AND THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO PUBLIC CHARGES OF US INVOLVEMENT. (CONFIDENTIAL) BUENOS AIRES 1095, 2/18.)

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2. THE SAHARA: ARAB LEAGUE TO MEDIATE

EMBASSY CAIRO REPORTS THAT ARAB LEAGUE SYG RIAD HAS DROPPED HIS RESISTANCE TO INTERVENING IN THE SAHARA DISPUTE, AND PLANNED TO LEAVE FOR ALGIERS YESTERDAY.

--RIAD'S RELUCTANCE TO INVOLVE HIMSELF WAS BASED ON FEAR THAT ANY EFFORT WAS FOREDOOMED.

--THE CAIRO PRESS SAYS, HOWEVER, THAT RIAD HAS NOW INFORMED HASSAN, BOUMEDIENNE AND OULD DADDAH THAT HE IS READY TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION THEY WISH TO SETTLE THE DISPUTE. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) CAIRO 2099, 2/18.)

3. BENIN: MENDING FENCES

IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE STORMY SESSION WITH AMBASSADOR ENGLE, FOREIGN MINISTER ALLADAYE, IN A CORDIAL DISCUSSION WITH THE DCM FEBRUARY 17, VOICED HIS SURPRISE AT THE DEPARTURE OF THE AMBASSADOR AND DENIED ANY MALEVOLENT INTENTIONS IN THE SESSION WITH THE AMBASSADOR FEBRUARY 12 (DESCRIBED BY THE EMBASSY AS AKIN TO A KANGAROO COURT). THE FOREIGN MINISTER:

--PROMISED THAT BENIN WILL MODIFY ITS (USUALLY ANTI-US) POSITIONS IN THE UN, AND REQUESTED THAT THE EMBASSY PRESENT ITS CASE TO THE MFA AS ISSUES ARISE.

EMBASSY COMMENT: ALLADAYE'S DENIAL, WHICH DID NOT INCLUDE AN APOLOGY, IS A WEAK ATTEMPT AT A COVER UP. THE USG'S DISPLEASURE OVER THE TREATMENT OF THE AMBASSADOR, HOWEVER, HAS AWAKENED THE GOVERNMENT TO THE RAMIFICATIONS OF ITS BEHAVIOR, ALTHOUGH WE REMAIN SKEPTICAL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S PROMISES OF A MODIFICATION OF BENIN'S POSTURE AT THE UN. (CONFIDENTIAL) COTONOU 304, 2/18 AND COTONOU 273, 2/12.)

4. CHINA SIGNALLING "BUSINESS AS USUAL"

CONSULATE GENERAL HONG KONG SAYS THE PRC LEADERSHIP SEEMS CONFIDENTIAL

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TO BE CLEARLY INDICATING THERE IS NO CHANGE IN THE BASIC PREMISES OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY.

--AFTER A WEEK'S LULL, FULMINATIONS AGAINST THE USSR HAVE RESUMED, DESPITE THE LARGE ROLE PLAYED BY HUA IN THE RETURN OF THE SOVIET HELICOPTER CREW.

--THE "OPENING TO THE WEST" POLICY APPEARS CONFIRMED

BY THE NIXON INVITATION AND THE USE MADE BY HUA OF HIS MEETING WITH THE VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR TO ANNOUNCE HIS NEW POSITION.

--HIGH-LEVEL VISITS ARE STILL ON TRACK, WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS PLAYING THEIR USUAL ROLES. (CONFIDENTIAL) HONG KONG 1789, 2/18.)

5. SOVIETS DENY ZAPPING EMBASSY MOSCOW

AN IZVESTIYA ARTICLE DISMISSES THE FLAP OVER SPY RAYS AT THE US EMBASSY AS AN "AWKWARD INVENTION," SAYING THERE ARE PLENTY OF INDUSTRIAL EMANATIONS IN ANY INDUSTRIAL CITY, AND CALLING THE FUROR AN OBVIOUS PLOY TO INJURE DETENTE. (UNCLASSIFIED) MOSCOW 2365, 2/18.) INGERSOLL

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